

# **Ralston Community Plan**

## **Introduction**

In 1996, Second District Baltimore County Councilman Kevin Kamenetz initiated discussions to address long-standing traffic congestion and parking problems in the Pikesville Business District. In the course of these discussions, the concept of a parallel road to Reisterstown Road was developed in order to improve traffic circulation and provide better access to available parking. This proposed parallel road, DeRisio Lane, will be located immediately west of the Reisterstown Road business district. It will extend between Church Lane and Sherwood Avenue and will define the edge of the Ralston community. Given this impact, Ralston community residents urged consideration of their neighborhood needs as well. In response to their concerns, Councilman Kamenetz introduced County Council Resolution #97-96 (see Exhibit 1 - Resolution 97-96), requesting the Office of Planning, the Office of Community Conservation, the Department of Public Works, and the Second District Councilman's Office to work with the Ralston community to prepare a County plan to address concerns which impact the quality of life in the Ralston neighborhood.

## **Physical Setting**

Established in 1897, Ralston is one of Pikesville's oldest communities. (See Exhibit 2 - Original Plat of Ralston.) The Ralston Community is located in northwest Baltimore County within the larger Pikesville community. Located on the south side of Reisterstown Road approximately one mile northwest of the Baltimore City line, Ralston enjoys convenient access to the Pikesville Business District, the Baltimore Beltway (I-695), and the Metro. Ralston also has easy access to public transportation, employment opportunities, shopping and entertainment venues. Children who live in this neighborhood attend Milbrook Elementary School, Pikesville Middle School and Pikesville High School. Generally, these schools maintain strong academic reputations. The Ralston community consists of approximately 320 homes on nearly 50 acres of land. The neighborhood displays mature, tree lined streets accented by a mixture of housing styles ranging from modest bungalow to modern Art Deco. The majority of the homes were built between 60 and 70 years ago. The oldest house in the community is an estimated 90 years old. According to residents, home prices in this community range from \$85,000 to \$125,000. (See Exhibit 3 - Boundaries of Ralston Community Plan.)

Ralston is a stable middle class community consisting primarily of well-maintained single family houses. However, there is a recognized need to stabilize, enhance and promote this neighborhood in order to face the challenges of the next century. As part of this task, the Ralston Community, working in conjunction with County representatives, determined the plan area boundaries, issues, and actions to be included in the Plan.

## **Community Conservation**

In the Baltimore County Master Plan 1989-2000 (the "Master Plan"), Community Conservation is defined as a coordinated series of public and private efforts designed to maintain and enhance the physical, social, and economic resources of the County's older communities. This plan addresses

issues identified by the Ralston Community from a Community Conservation perspective. The planning effort involved community discussion, walking tours, and a survey of the community.

### **Community Survey**

The Ralston Community Association hand-delivered survey forms to approximately 320 Ralston households, with a 16% (50) response rate. In early February 1998, draft copies of the Plan were mailed to all Ralston residents. In addition, a community input hearing was conducted on February 24, 1998 to review and prioritize goals of this Plan.

The initial survey revealed that the residents had the following concerns, listed in order of priority:

- I.      Public Safety
- II.     Rental Properties
- III.    Traffic
- IV.    Code enforcement
- V.     Open space
- VI.    Infrastructure